4: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
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to about sixteen, and by young manhood and womanhood is meant the time between the end of youth and the early twenties. These, of course, are only generalizations.

Since the main object is to determine infant and childhood mortality rates, and survival rates at the time of reproduction, death rates are calculated only for the period up to marriage. The point is to find out how many people survive until the time when they can reproduce themselves. It must therefore be remembered that the total number of deaths is always the total number occurring before marriage. Moreover, in the genealogical method, where in one classification all the principals are dead, this is the only feasible procedure.

It is obvious that there will be a certain amount of error in any vital statistics collected among a people where there are no records of birth and death, but the importance of real and classificatory relatives, the rather formalized pattern of behavior between them, and the elaborate pregnancy, birth, and death rites, and interclan marriages, enables a Melanesian native to give a fairly accurate genealogy. It may be also that the very absence of written records throws a heavier burden upon the individual's memory, which he does not shirk. But it is obvious that no matter how good the memory of Melanesian informants, errors in these data must exist. They are, however, in the nature of the material and would probably exist in any study made on a similar primitive people. As far as possible, these errors are indicated in the description of the tables, which, it should be understood, denote general trends rather than exact statements. The genealogical method, while taking much more time than the census method, enables one to separate the subjects into age groups and presents a more comprehensive prospective over a longer period of time. But because of the great amount of detailed work and time involved in the use of this method, it is only practical for a small unit of people.

The nearest comparable figures are those of the recent government census taken in 1929 for a part of the east coast of New Ireland (from Kavieng to the village of Karu, approximately 147 miles beginning at the northern end of the island) and which includes over a larger area the people designated in this study as generations II, III, IV, but excludes those in generation I (the dead).[4] The results of the government

[4] Chinnery, E. W. P.—*Anthropological Report*, No. 6, Territory of New Guinea. In print.

4: Powdermaker 5-5 (1929-1930)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10
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127 census are compared whenever possible to the results of this genealogical study of a smaller unit of the same people, for the purpose of checking the accuracy of the latter study.

ETHNOLOGICAL FACTS

105 Before presenting the tables it is pertinent to give a few ethnological facts related to the statistics. This group of Melanesians are an agricultural, matrilineal and matrilocal people, with exogamous moieties subdivided into clans. There is no scarcity of land, which is communally owned, and getting sufficient food is not difficult, although it requires a certain amount of industry. The diet is limited, taro being the staple food. This is supplemented by fish, pigs, yams, bananas, pawpaws, coconuts, etc.

582 Sexual customs have an important bearing on the statistics. A girl is usually married directly after her first menstruation. A man's preferred mate is the mother's brother's daughter's daughter, or the father's sister's daughter's daughter, and he is thus of a generation above his wife. While the preferred marriage quite frequently does not take place, the husband is almost always older than his wife, usually a difference of about five to ten years. The girl has had no sexual intercourse, although she has indulged in sexual play, but the man, being some years past puberty, has had sexual experience previous to the time of his marriage. There are no unmarried women. There may be a couple of young widows in the community, but it is just a question of time before they remarry. Both husband and wife have extra-marital intercourse and there is no social stigma in having lovers or mistresses. Rather, it is the correct thing to do. The husband of the mother is always the sociological father of her children. Until very recently it was quite usual for a man to have two wives and this had been the case with most of the married men of my community. It was relatively rare for a woman to have two husbands, although it did and still does happen occasionally. Missions have taught a monogamous system of marriage, with partial success. Polygamy still exists, but not to the same degree or extent as it did a generation ago. White contact has scarcely affected extra-marital intercourse. Should the village be close to a mission center (mine was not) love affairs would simply be carried on more surreptitiously,

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